Final Report

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The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change - Saskatchewan Indian Agriculture Program Inc. Courses

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

For many native reserve people, farming is a relatively new venture. In order to develop and maintain their farming enterprises they are willing to learn and practice new skills. The Rural Family Developing Skills For Change Program was offered to SIAP's clients in order to help them: a) address the socioeconomic needs of their families b) to provide a framework for families to cope with changes from the community, the economy and the changing roles of family members and to c) enhance the business and interpersonal skills of native families to today's standards.

Courses were set up in four areas of the province. The areas were: Prince Albert, Yorkton, Fort Qu'Appelle and North Battleford. Four courses were held starting in February, 1991 and continuing until February, 1992.

The first course was held in Prince Albert using existing Rural Family Program material. After this course, the material and presentation of the program was tailored more to meet the needs of SIAP's clients. The overall rating of the courses by participants was good to very good in each section of the evaluation.

In order to facilitate better implementation of this program to native people some changes should be made. They are:

- -Changes in material to reflect native needs and culture
- -Make the program available to other groups in the native community besides farmers
- -Change material to accommodate all skills levels of participants
- -Develop some one-on-one materials for people who are not able to come to the courses
- -Make some learning modules "stand alones" to allow for short workshops
- -Issue certificates of achievement which qualify participants for education, employment and business opportunities.

B. TECHNICAL REPORT:

Background and Objectives

The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Program was brought to the attention of the Regional Extension Manager for SIAP, Mr. Ezzat Dessouki during a meeting between the Saskatchewan Rural Development Regional Managers and the Rural Family Project Coordinator, Ms. Sheila Gamble, Trace Consulting Inc. (nee: Burgam Consulting Ltd.). Following the meeting, Mr. Dessouki, approached Ms. Gamble regarding setting up courses on native reserves. As the course schedule and budget were already allocated for the winter of 1990-91 it was decided to approach ADF for funding for courses on reserves. A proposal was developed and submitted to ADF. The project was approved and a contract was made between ADF and SIAP who in turn subcontracted the project work to Trace Consulting Inc. The original contracted time period was from January, 1991 to December 1991, but the contract due date was extended to February 29, 1992 in order to facilitate courses at all of the proposed sites.

In the current changing economic environment in Saskatchewan, rural people are attempting to change and update their social and business management skills. Clients of SIAP also want to upgrade their skills in order to meet the changing times.

The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change, SIAP program objectives were:

1. To help course participants address the socio-economic needs of their families.
2. To provide a framework for families to cope with changes from the community, the economy and the changing roles of family members.
3. To enhance the business and interpersonal skills of native families to today's standards.

Project Activities

Activities for this project included:

- Meetings between the consultant and members of SIAP's Extension Staff
- Information meetings in potential site areas
- Gathering and editing material specifically for SIAP clients needs
- Course implementation at selected sites

Meetings were held between members of SIAP's Extension Staff and the consultant during the first two months of the project in order to: familiarize SIAP staff members with the Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Program, exchange information on course sites and potential participants and to discuss different methods of publicity which could be used to fill courses.

After these meetings took place, SIAP Extension Agrologists who had the chosen course locations in their regions, set the dates, arranged for equipment and meeting facilities, and promoted the program to their clients. Various means of course promotion were used to obtain participants. They were in the form of letters to clients, telephone calls, in-person visits to individuals' homes on the reserves and presentations at different meetings including economic development boards. The consultant made five in-person visits to meetings at the various course sites to give informational presentations on the program.

Initially, the four sites that were chosen for courses were: Prince Albert, Fort Qu'Appelle, Yorkton and North Battleford.

The first course was held at the Prince Albert Tribal Council Centre in Prince Albert during late February and early March of 1991 (See Appendix A - Progress Report submitted to ADF on June 30, 1991 for course details)

During the summer of 1991 some changes were made to course material in order to make it more meaningful and useful to native participants.

Work continued on setting up the remainder of the course sites for the fall of 1991.

The first two sites chosen for fall courses were Yorkton and Fort Qu'appelle. Both sites did not have the required number of participants at the first sessions due to various circumstances such as no transportation or other

committments. One group of three people who had planned to attend at Fort Qu'Appelle lost their home to a fire the night before the course started. Course instruction proceeded as planned. Although the numbers increased at both sites on the second week there were still not enough to meet the course requirement of ten people. Therefore, a decision was made by SIAP staff and the consultant to combine the two sites and hold the balance of the course at Melville. The final two sessions were held in Melville in November.

After the consultant and the SIAP Extension Agrologist for the Saskatoon area met with the Kinistin Band Economic Development Board and the band chief, Albert Scott a request was made by Kinistin for a Rural Family course on their reserve. The program started in late January in the women's workshop with various band members in attendance. The classes were cancelled on two occasions: once due to unexpected time committments of participants and once due to bad weather. There has been no opportunity to complete the last two sessions of this course.

The fourth course was held in North Battleford. On the first scheduled night there were not enough participants to start the program. By the second night there were enough and the course proceeded. One evening of this program was also cancelled due to bad weather and again there has been no opportunity to complete this course.

The funding for this project was set up to facilitate four Rural Family courses. Because of demand for more than four courses, funding was tentatively allocated out of the main Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Project (#V-89-06-0311) during the early fall of 1991 by the program coordinator. The Onion Lake Band, north of North Battleford is considering holding a course. As yet, plans for this course have not been completed.

Results and Conclusions

Generally, people who attended the Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Course appeared to enjoy the classes and found the information useful. The verbal feedback was positive. As well, some participants who attended the first class told their friends and families about the course and brought them with them to the second class. There were several comments by participants that the information offered in this class could be used by other native groups, such as band councils. Follow-up courses were requested by participants that dealt with the offered subject areas in more depth as well as new topics. The participants also asked for further contact with the instructor through home visits and other groups.

In total approximately forty-five people were in attendance at the courses at various times.

Because of the need to cancel the last classes at both the Kinistin and North Battleford sites the instructor was unable to obtain written evaluations for those courses.

The results of the written evaluation that were obtained are as follows: (See Appendix B for evaluation form)

The average age of course participants was thirty-five years. The number of men and women attending was almost equal, with there being slightly more men in attendance.

All of the course participants lived on a reserve except for three people who lived in Saskatoon and Yorkton.

The majority of the participants reported that they had heard about the program from their SIAP Extension Agrologist. Six survey respondents reported that they had heard about the program from a family friend or relative.

In the OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE COURSE section of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the course from five perspectives: course content organization, relevance of material to expectations, relevance of material to maintaining interest, usefulness of audiovisual materials and usefulness of student learning materials. The overall rating in this area rose from "good" in the first group to "very good" in the remainder of the courses. The usefulness of audiovisual materials rating remained at good. After the first class changes were implemented which altered the ratings. Some of these changes were: new or different language/terms were explained in more detail, care was taken not to use "big" words or terms, and more examples were used that related specifically to native people. The instructor

was informed that native people like to learn from real life situations and stories. More examples of this nature were incorporated into the class. After adjustments were made, a comment from a SIAP Extension Agrologist was "The introduction and statistics were adjusted well for an Indian audience. The historical introduction and instructor admitting to be open to Indian experiences seemed to set a good stage for starting the course."

Participants rated the use of course materials highly. Because of this rating more self-evaluation written exercises were used in the course and more class time was allotted for this. A drawback to this addition was that not as much course material could be covered at each session and more time was used for each course than had been originally planned. The course participants had wide ranging scholastic abilities. Some of the participants needed a lot of one-on-one guidance, which also took more class time. The course material for the Rural Family program is quite detailed and difficult to cover in the time allotted. One comment received was; "Some of the modules could be the start of a whole week spent on one concept; however, the material seems to wet the appetite to learn more and maybe this is what we hope to achieve."

After the first session in Prince Albert, more time was taken before showing videos to explain the content. Two of the videos shown in this course are quite detailed and hard to grasp on the first viewing. Perhaps videos which are "deep" in content could be shown more than once in order for the class participants to garner the full value.

Participants were asked to rate the COURSE FACILITIES. They were asked four questions which dealt with: course length, session length, meeting facility, and time of day The overall rating in this section was from good to very good.

Comments received in this area included:

"Too short, need more time"
"I should have come from the start, not only the last two classes."
"The time was good, evening classes are better than the day time."
"Different meeting sites were hard."

The COURSE INSTRUCTION was measured in five areas: presentation of material, encouragement of member participation and class discussion, ability to make the

course interesting, ability to adjust the pace of the course and attitude to course material. The overall instructor rating went from "good" to "very good" after the first course in Prince Albert. In the original plan the consultant was to team teach with a SIAP Extension Agrologist. However, due to a lack of training time, and the fact that some of the agrologists had no formal training in the human resource management area, it was decided after the first course, to have the consultant teach all of the remaining classes. A SIAP Extension Agrologist was present at almost every class session that was held and they contributed greatly in terms of assistance and information at the classes.

Comments received from participants in this area included:

"Great to listen and talk to. Got us all involved. Liked the amount of reference material. I really enjoyed being a part of the course. It may have opened more doors for the future."

"It was great except for the lengthy credit management module."

"I mean it when I say this, it was all interesting."

"Course should have been geared more towards Indian farmers, it was Indian farmers at the course. Sometimes the instructors got carried away with $500 words and lost the ordinary farmers."

"Very well explained and the deliverance was good."

"Your presentation skills are good. Your openness to new ideas allows participants to say their piece of mind. This makes them feel welcome and they feel comfortable to release their true feelings. I guess the only down fall of free wheeling is that it makes it difficult to get through all of the course material; however, I don't believe this to be a problem in the overall evaluation of the course, because we achieved some good discussion and developed some trust between the instructor and the participants by not being ruled by the clock."

The next area of evaluation of the course dealt with CONTENT EVALUATION. The first question asked participants which modules they <u>enjoyed</u> the most. The top three modules were: Time Management, Self-management and Values and Goals.

Comments on this question were:

"They made me take a more serious look at my situation back home."

"I needed these to help the family and so the family can benefit."

"I learned things I did not know."
"Good for business oF farming."
"They really applied to my line of work."
"Past experiences can be changed."
"Enjoyed all of the modules."

Question 2. in content evaluation asked participants: "From which three modules did you gain the most useful information?" The highest rated modules were: Communication, Decision Making, Self-Management and Time Management.

Comments on this question were:

"All of them were excellent and good to listen to and learn from."

"Because I have to learn how to set out my own goals and manage them."

"Because these modules will help me communicate better, understand and maked wise decisions."

"I'm more closer to my spouse, we can talk together and have fun as a family."

"The info was accurate for me to understand."

The third question under content evaluation asked participants from which modules they gained the most information for long-term use. The modules were: Self-management , Time Management and Communication.

Comments on this section were:

"I've read the reference material over at home. It has a lot of good advice. Maybe these are areas I can use to improve myself and our farm. They make me a better person.

"Because all these will make me be aware and be able to help the family better."

When participants were asked if there were any modules that were not useful to them, only three responded. Business Management, Credit Management and Values and Goals were each rated as not being useful by one person. There were no comments in this section.

The first question under GENERAL COURSE COMMENTS asked participants if they would recommend The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Program to a friend. There were no negative responses. Some of the comments on this question were:

"Because it really helped at home."

"I would recommend this course to band members, leaders, etc."

"Because it helped me find me."

"Because it has the jive to it."

Participants were asked if there were any reasons why they might not have taken the course. There were only four "yes" responses to this question. The comments were:

"Distance, time slot was kind of hard on me, vehicle problems."

"Not interested, taken similar courses, no time."

"I would not have taken this course without my wife being involved."

Answers to the question: "How many people in your community can you think of who would have benefited from this course and did not attend?" varied. The average number of "people" circled was five. Comments on this question were:

"Advertise, tell others"

"Bring it to them (closer). Some have no real means of getting there (one car family)."

"Do more on Stress Management and Communication."

"Yes, explain what the program is all about."

"Use a video tape."

"Close the bingo halls, bars, bus them to town, pay them a salary."

"Don't know, maybe write up a poster and send it to the band offices."

The last question asked for general course comments.

"I really enjoyed it, even though it was kind of long hours."

"The changing from one location to another presented a problem."

"The course was great, but yet too short."

"The instructor kept us thinking and gave us a great way to view different situations."

"This is a good course and I hope there's another one so I could take it from the start."

The material used to teach the Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change - SIAP was developed in a larger program for off-reserve, non-native participants and very little budget was allocated in this project for changing the course material to make it more suitable for native participants. After the first course, however, some changes were made to the material. These changes increased the rating of the program by the course participants. Some of the changes made were:

1. As well as having general reference books for use by participants, books on native culture were added.
2. Native statistics were added to general course materials in some areas.
3. Areas of expressed importance by native people such as conflict resolution were emphasized more using native issues as examples.

At the suggestion of an ADF staff member certificates of achievement were developed and sent to participants who completed the course. (See Appendix C)

Participants at the courses displayed a wide diversity in skill levels. As well, a few of the participants had had previous training in some of the areas covered in the course. Because of these differences the material that was covered was not enough for some and too much for others. Course material written at two levels - one more advanced, for participants who had had previous training and a simpler level for beginners might make the program more useful for all participants. If there were enough participants, two programs could be offered.

Many of the participants did not attend all of the sessions, although they did receive a complete book of course material. The material has been written to be used in conjunction with class participation. Therefore, the material in the book which dealt with classes the participants did not attend would not be very useful to them. Perhaps the material could be broken down into separate modules, which could be used alone (separate covers) and handed out at the beginning of each session. For those participants who attended a number of classes the stand alone booklets could be grouped together in binders. This method could also result in course material cost savings in the long run.

All rural people, native and non-native alike have very busy time schedules. Although many people would have liked to attend this program, they were unable to because of the large time committment required. Separating the different subject areas in The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change Program into stand alone modules which could be taken as separate one-day workshops or tied together into one program might better facilitate the needs of SIAP's clients. As well, people would only need to attend those classes that they had not taken previously.

Two of the courses that were offered were day courses and two were night courses. In terms of teaching and learning day courses are superior to night courses. There is more class time and people are more alert. However, many people now work on or off the reserve at jobs and the evenings are the only time they have available for course taking. Night classes which could run for shorter sessions and longer time periods would probably work better than long evenings spread over a short time period.

Difficulties were encountered in all of the courses in having full attendance if a class date or time was changed, even if it was announced in class. The courses ran much smoother if they were at the same time every week.

A number of the participants had trouble getting transportation to the classes if they were off the reserve. If enough participants could be recruited on individual reserves, and the courses held there, consistent attendance at the courses would perhaps be higher.

Not enough time or budget was allocated in this project for SIAP Extension staff training and program familiarization. It is very difficult for a staff to promote a program which is not familiar to them. Several SIAP Extension staff attended the courses sessions and commented that now that they knew what the program was about, it would be much easier to promote it to their clients.

Indications for Further Development

The Rural Family: Developing Skills for Change - SIAP courses that were offered were generally well received by participants. Most participants had never taken courses in human resource development previously. The SIAP clients who took this course showed an awareness of the changes that are taking place within their own culture and in the general population as well. They expressed a need for training in areas like this in order to make positive progress to the future as individuals, for their families and for native groups as a whole.

In order to facilitate the needs of this group, changes and further development of this program would be beneficial. The proposed changes are:

1. Change the course material further to reflect the cultural needs and differences of native people.

2. Expand the program offering to other groups in the native community such as: band councils, women's groups, 4-H clubs, etc.

3. Change the program material to accommodate people who are at different skills levels in this area.

4. Not all people are able to come to courses, but still have a need for the information and training. Materials could be developed which could be used more in a one-on-one environment in order to develop skills in this group.

5. In order to accommodate potential participants who are unable to come to lengthy courses, program material could be written in several stand alone modules which could also be tied together in one course. Programs of this type have to become more flexible in order to meet changing times.

6. A certificate of achievement was given to participants who completed the course. In the future, perhaps this program could be tied to larger certificate programs which would qualify successful participants for education, employment or business opportunities.